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## CURRENT OPINION

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### War and the Social Mind

A very timely discussion is found in the October number of the *Review and Expositor*, the title being "The War Spirit—a Study in Social Psychology," and the writer, Dr. Edward B. Pollard, of Crozer Theological Seminary. Crowd-consciousness reveals a remarkable dissimilarity to that of the individual. Its mental processes indeed are entirely unlike what might be accepted as the processes of the aggregate of the individual minds making up a given crowd. The mass mind allies itself rather to the status of a chemical compound than to that of a mechanical mixture. Mental contagions such as real estate booms and riots, religious epidemics such as the Crusades of Europe, and the more modern great revivals can be classed among the phenomena of crowd psychology. In all these is discovered the creation of a social, psychic atmosphere in which persons are lifted clear of their normal habitudes in thought and life.

There is a distinction which must be drawn between public opinion and the mind of the mass. The former is some social judgment which is the result of more or less seasoned public discussion and deliberation, while the latter lends itself to hasty and ill-considered action. The written constitution of the United States is a safeguard against impulsive and destructive movements of the social mind. Certain contrasts between the mind individual and the mind social may be readily drawn. (1) The latter is more childlike and primitive. "Crowds are intellectually inferior to individuals." Yet they are more swift to act. "Strong emotion tends to inhibit reason. Only the strongest can withstand the power of the mass." (2) The mob moves on a lower moral level than the individual. "Le Bon states that among

the most savage members of the French Convention were to be found the most inoffensive citizens." (3) The crowd is far less consistent than the individual. It has been said that the crowd has no conscience whatever. And it is certainly true that past conventions and established principles play a feeble part in the fashioning of mob conduct. Professor Leuba has recently expressed it in this manner: "There are in human nature, belonging to human nature, forces that, for better or for worse, can be appealed to and stirred to effective intensity; so that cowards may become heroes or heroes cowards, and meek men may turn into bloodthirsty beasts or steadfast followers of Jesus even unto the death of the martyr." (4) The crowd more than the individual mind responds to the primitive, elemental, instinctive appeal. The fear impulse plays the predominant part in such appeals. Herbert Spencer gives to fear a central place in social control while William James ranges fear along with love and anger as "the three most exciting emotions of which human nature is susceptible." "Fear of hell, under the passionate appeal of a Sunday, will cause multitudes to give up the primrose paths of sin for the sawdust trail of penitence."

Professor Giddings educes three laws of social control: (1) "The law of origin—impulsive social action begins among people of least inhibitory control; (2) the law of progress—the contagion spreads in geometric rather than in arithmetic ratio; (3) the law of restraint—the campaign will be retarded, and finally checked, when it reaches those persons who are least suggestible and accustomed to the greatest self-control, those who are trained to subordinate impulse to the rational processes." To these laws Dr. Pollard would add a fourth, the law of contact. The spread of

mental contagions depends largely upon the proximity of individuals one to another. In the modern world there is a mob mind which is not dependent on spatial contiguity. Rapid communication of human thoughts through modern inventions creates a world-neighborhood where mere spatial relativity is almost a negligible quantity. "Applying these facts and principles of crowd psychology to the war spirit which for the past two years has swayed the major portion of the civilized world, the writer finds abundant illustrative material. Ideas such as competitive armament, the doctrine of the divine right of force, competitive commercialism understood only in terms of competitive navalism, created a psychic atmosphere highly favorable to the spread of the war epidemic. "In Europe a mental militaristic atmosphere was all-pervasive. A single assassin's bullet was like an electric spark, sent into the chemical mixture, inducing the rapid, horrible red precipitate that for years had been held in solution." The war demonstrates the dominance of primal instincts in the crowd-consciousness. Anti-militaristic tendencies displayed in modern industrial interdependence, in Christianity, in socialism, are comparatively young, while racial hate, brute force, the spirit of revenge, run back to the first beginnings of human life. "The newly acquired character breaks down before an instinctive trait. One has pictured a group of socialists in a dreary hall midst tobacco smoke and cheap cigars. An imperial brass band and a battalion of soldiers pass by. 'That excellent gathering of enlightened humanity will follow the brass band to hell, provided it keeps on playing popular airs.' These well-meaning men are victims of traditions of countless generations, customs of thought mellowed by age, that have entered into their subconscious being, into the very fibre of their life."

In the contest between so-called "preparedness" and "pacifism," the former,

with its appeal to self-preservation, to brute force, to bodily fear, to outward glory—all primal human instincts—enjoys a decided advantage in social dominance. The appeal to fear plays a large part in the evoking of war conditions. "Preparation for war usually begins in fear of a possible or a supposed enemy. Fort Sumter was stormed because the Confederates feared that the reinforcements on the way would give trouble; and the reinforcements were on the way for fear the Carolinians would storm Sumter." The sword of fear, socially considered, has a double edge.

Some of the forces at work in American national life which tend to inhibit the emotional contagion of war may be observed. The fact that America is widely removed geographically from the central theater of armed conflict is not so important as many are disposed to believe. The heterogeneity of the American people is a far more important factor in creating comparative coolness in the midst of the world's war fever. "Men of various nationalities do not think readily and spontaneously together." Another anti-militaristic force is the commercial activity of the American business men. "A busy man is not easily hypnotized; he is not easily suggestible, nor highly emotional." The filling of war orders has largely done away with the idle discontented man who is quick to respond to the harangue of the demagogue. The unusual self-possession of the present chief executive is also a marked factor in preventing the war obsession from overcoming the American public. As a purely psychological interest, apart from political or moral issues, this must not be ignored. Finally, the strong individualism of American thinking may account in no small measure for the absence of the war spirit in this country. "What the social mind needs, above all things else today, is to be directed toward social, moral, and spiritual

conquests." Men must learn to think exclusively in terms of permanent peace.

### Contemporary Religious Ideals

Professor George Albert Coe, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, presented a paper before the City Club of Chicago the past summer and this appears in *Religious Education* for October under the heading "Contemporary Ideals in Religion." The author remarks at the outset on the difference in religion between the Athenian state of Pericles and the American nation of the present day. Athens then was the state and as such maintained each year in the Eleusinian Mysteries a regular revival of religious consciousness. On these occasions the Athenian youth learned from the hierophant the ideal meaning of life as it appeared to the Greek mind. In America today there is no state religion, no hall of mysteries, "no initiation of its youths into an American conviction as to the destiny of man." The spirit of this nation is not vehicled exclusively through one particular church with its creed and its institutions. The ideals of religion reach us, not through one church, but through many, and these are far from displaying even the semblance of unity and concord. "Our America is the scene of the warfare of the spirit." Nor can it be said of any one of these different bodies that so far "it has committed itself in word and act to an ideal that can possibly be the rallying center for the spiritual aspirations of all America." Yet in looking over the divisiveness of religious life in this country it may in all fairness be observed that moving throughout this life, complex as it is, a real religious spirit animates the national consciousness, "the spirit of America—nay, of something larger than America." This religious spirit is that of a possible world-society, of the world-democracy that is to be. The religious ideals of contemporary America are found

neither in the traditional forms of doctrine held by American churches nor through the media of a modern religious revival. The former come down from earlier generations and do not embody the concepts current in present-day aspirations toward democracy. The latter, although powerful and important in releasing us temporarily from the dulness of the economic grind, provide no unerring guide to a solution of modern social problems. "There are three sources as to religious ideals, upon which, in conjunction, we may rely with some confidence, namely: the expenditures of religious bodies, the content and method of religious education, and declarations of religious bodies when they are confronted with the social problems of the day."

1. *Expenditures.*—Under this item is seen territory occupied in common by all religious bodies. Philanthropy, education, worship, missions at home and abroad—in these activities all the churches are spending largely each year. In some churches worship is merely a pleasant abstraction in agreeable apartness. "The portals of some of our temples swing between a vast and seething present, full of unsolved problems, and a reposeful past which in magnificent attire ever celebrates anew its own complete self-sufficiency." In other churches the experience of worship is made to center around present problems of faith and life, and to lead to a consciousness of the great spirit of unity. The change in missionary activities, from the effort to save the individual from sin by preaching to earnest co-operation with the socially constructive forces of other peoples in the hope of raising the entire social level, may be seen in the work of every denomination. Church unity is nearer solution abroad than at home. Also the home base is receiving a new evaluation. The laic as well as the cleric mind takes part in this process. Indeed it is from the vantage-ground of modern missionary effort that a wide

enlargement of the present social horizon may be observed.

2. *Religious education.*—This source of information is even more trustworthy than the preceding. "When we teach the young we discriminate between what we are and what our ideal is. Here we criticize ourselves, and pay something for preventing in future generations the faults of our own." All churches are teaching common morality, thus complementing the work of the American public-school system. Yet there are differences in the interpretations of common morality. "'Thou shalt not steal' is actually made to mean in our present life either 'Hold as sacred the present law of private property' or 'Revise this law fundamentally in the interests of humanity.'" This is only one instance of many that might be given. The revival of religious education in orthodox Judaism has for its end the perpetuation of race solidarity through language, ceremonial, and race distinctions, and makes for a permanent cleavage in the social consciousness of America. Liberal Judaism shows a tendency to override race distinctions in stressing the social ideals of the great Hebrew prophets. Religious education in the Roman Catholic church regards moral conduct as obedience to an authority vested in the church itself. "This great historic institution sees no hope for our moral distractions, our divided purposes, short of the extension of the church itself until it becomes the one and only church of us all. This is her ideal America. She cannot identify herself whole-heartedly with any humanitarian reconstruction of the ethical bases of law, for she regards her authority in the moral sphere as exclusive." There are Protestant bodies also that in the religious education of their young insist more or less upon a social unity based upon the particular purposes of the particular religious body. With all these is also found the tendency to dis sever the "sacred" from the "secular" in human life, and thus

they avoid annoying and excessive contact with the jarring ideals of society at large. "The religious bodies that most insist upon the possession of exclusive or unique authority for themselves or for their dogmas are the ones that have the least quarrel with the bisection of life into the secular and the sacred." It is encouraging to note the growth of a feeling that is opposing particularism throughout the Protestant churches. The injunction to get right with God is coupled with social obligation, and the process of salvation is beginning to be viewed as the reconstruction of society into a brotherhood.

3. *Declarations of religious bodies in the face of modern problems.*—The voices here are variant. It cannot yet be said that the churches see clearly the obligation to lose life in order to gain the world-life toward which they aspire. It is true that the inception of a new order is with us. The "Social Creed" of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America faces the spirit of brotherhood with courage and hope and splendid nonconformity. The declaration "The Church does not stand for the present social order, but only for so much of it as accords with the principles laid down by Jesus Christ," gives the lie to the oft-repeated statement that the churches are merely fortresses of social conservatism. In conclusion the writer asks if American religious ideals contain healing for the present world-fever. "Religion that supposed itself to be a monotheism of universal significance turns out to be a collection of national religions, each with its own god of war. Brotherhood was a sentiment, a hope, an ethical fragrance; but the hand upon the throttle of the social engine of steel was not the right hand of fellowship." Is there anything better in the religion of America? Can it be said that we possess a greater guaranty of the peace of the world? National selfishness and national self-will are great giants, sons

of Anak, against whom many are fearful of fighting. "'If only God delight in us, the God of the world-brotherhood, he will bring us into the land of world-peace, and give it unto us.' Thus speak the few. But the congregation bids stone them with stones."

### Woman and the Church

In the *Contemporary Review* for October, J. R. Cohu discusses the place of woman in the church in an article whose title is "Should Women 'Speak' in Church?" It appears that the National Mission Council, recently convened in England, placed itself on record as affirming: (1) that the aims and ideals of the women's movement, apart from its political and other claims, are in harmony with the teaching of the Christ and his church as to the equality of men and women in the sight of God—equality in privilege, equality in calling, equality in opportunity of service; (2) the importance of securing adequate representation of woman upon the conferences, councils, and assemblies of the church, in relation both to the National Mission and to the permanent work and mission of our church; (3) the importance of giving definite directions as to the best ways of using the services and receiving the message of women speakers, whether in the church or elsewhere." Such resolutions, when put into practice, notably by the bishops of London and Chelmsford, aroused bitter opposition, the opponents stigmatizing the movement as "un-Catholic and an open defiance of St. Paul's express prohibition of the public ministration of women in the church." The writer endeavors to meet the quotation of the prohibition in I Cor. 14:34 by pointing out that the social and mental atmosphere of today is far different from that in the days of early apostolic times. In Greece and Rome and also in Palestine the general conviction in the first century of our era was that woman was naturally

and pronouncedly inferior to man and accordingly must be in subjection to him. Paul no doubt shared in these convictions and hence his strictures upon the gentler sex. No doubt, too, the local circumstances at Corinth made it unseemly for any self-respecting woman to stand in the public gaze, and the words of the apostle are addressed to this particular problem. Paul's isolated rule may have been a golden rule then, but it is a leaden rule now. In explaining Paul it is well to get down underneath isolated rules and precepts to the principles which are constantly interpreting, superseding, and at times even contradicting these rules. In Gal. 3:28 the principle that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," is one which meant in its application a doing away with Jewish exclusiveness, slavery, and sex-inferiority. "The retention of any one of these barriers maims Christianity and convicts it of failure." Practice lags far behind the enunciation of a principle. It took eighteen hundred years before the monstrous institution of slavery was openly pronounced a scandal to Christianity and publicly set aside. Nineteen hundred years have not sufficed to demonstrate to all the iniquity attached to the idea of woman's subjection, "and in this matter the church is the greatest sinner." Yet there have been changes in the place of woman in society. Equality in privilege, in calling, in opportunity of service, has unfolded the highest and best in her without unsexing her or robbing her of those qualities which make up her charm and power. She has proved herself equal to responsibility in religious work, yet it is in this sphere, peculiarly her own, "that the church today slams the door in her face." If Paul were here today he would tell us to settle the question, not by an isolated ruling of past ages, but by settling it on its merits in relation to the progress of Christianity.

### Universal Peace

In *Harper's Magazine* for November the prospects of a world-wide peace are pictured by Sydney Brooks under the heading, "The Dream of Universal Peace." The writer maintains that such devices as the prohibition of private dealings in war material, the abolition of secret diplomacy, and the forming of peace leagues do not reach the heart of the problem. This can be touched only in two ways: "either by the emergence of some great power that will bestride the known world like an incredibly vaster Roman Empire, or by such a change in the dominant motives and emotions of mankind as will stamp upon armed conflict the moral obloquy that now attaches to slavery. Universal peace means either universal despotism or a transformed humanity."

The Hague Conference of 1913 did not take into account the world as it really is and human nature as we know it. It legislated for impossible Utopias and ignored the passions that run rife among the proletariat of today. Less than a year later came the unhappy sequel. Yet some color was lent to the schemes of the Hague Conference by the fact that to all appearances the world of nations, especially of those in Europe, was beginning to realize a unity. Travel, interchange of labor, of customs, habits, letters, arts, sports, amusements, the disappearance of religious feuds, even between Islam and the "infidel," the rise of woman as an economic and political force, the strife for democratic institutions, the spread of mutual trading in the material things of life—all this gave promise that a united commonwealth at least in Europe was on the near horizon. "What was it

at bottom that, at a time of apparently unparalleled international communion, hurled the nations at one another's throats? This root-cause, this comprehensive source, I take to be nothing less than the fact and sentiment of nationality."

The corporate sense has moved through the group, the tribe, the clan, but has stopped short at the nation. The six leading powers of Europe were in times of peace spending \$5,000,000 a day and are now paying out nearly twenty times that amount simply for the purpose of guarding the treasure of their nationality. Universal peace can come only when the appeal to nationality is set aside. One absolute Power could force a cessation of strife. But pacifists generally do not welcome such a solution of the problem. The other way is to render nugatory the bias of race or speech or nation. Mr. Norman Angell has done great service in demonstrating the futility of war in achieving the ends in view. "By showing that aggression defeats itself in our modern world of credit and universal trading, and by elucidating the real principles of international relationship, he has undoubtedly done a great deal to set men's minds in a new and saner direction." Yet there remains a doubt as to whether the single appeal to self-interest, the economic argument that war does not pay, is potent enough to reach the deeper issues of the problem which after all touch the heart and conscience rather than the pocket of mankind. The moral values, judgments, and instincts of humanity must undergo a radical transformation before the dream of a universal peace can become a reality.